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ABSTRACT

This study examined what moral issues meant to practicing teachers. Finnish secondary teachers described moral dilemmas they had experienced during their teaching careers and principles they used to solve them (particularly situations in which they had difficulty deciding how to act). The narrative of one female teacher concerned about smoking at her school is highlighted. Though smoking was forbidden by law in Finnish schools, both teachers and students broke this rule in several ways. This study adopted three interpretive viewpoints from the field of philosophy and ethics to examine the case, emphasizing the ethics of purpose, rules and principles, and probability. The analysis uncovered the teacher's background beliefs, which guided her ethical reflection on smoking at school. These included her own values which guided her educational practice. Her attitudes and concerns were identified as factors influencing her practical reflection. Her perceptions of the professional code of ethics were revealed in her reflection on the rules and principles guiding her educational practice in the case of smoking. While legal norms and organizational morality guided the standards teachers applied to smoking, teachers' own interpretations of rules and principles were the most important sources of standards guiding their professional practice. (Contains 34 references.) (SM)

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Paper presented in the symposium
"Professional Ethics in the New Millenium" at the
9th Congress of the European Association for Research on
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Constructing Moral Reference Points in Teachers' Practical Reflection - The Case of Smoking

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INTRODUCTION

Educators are called upon to mediate upon many private and public interests that pertain to personal, professional, organizational, and societal values. This work of mediating conflicting values relates to guarding and promoting the best interests of a student. But what is meant when we say we are making decisions in the best interests of students? Each of the philosophical, ethical, and pedagogical justifications contributes content and meaning to the phrase. While each of these perspectives deserves consideration, in this paper we limit ourselves to an exploration of three interpretations from the field of philosophy and ethics. We focus on *the ethic of purpose*, *the ethic of rules and principles*, and *the ethic of probability*, together with their philosophical perspectives and practical interpretations (Walker, 1998).

Our goal is to determine what moral issues mean to teachers in practice. We aim to interpret and translate teachers' understandings from the language they use, and to give concrete expressions to these interpretations by their daily ethical actions (Bernstein, 1992). In this effort, Pring (2000) argues, it is necessary to pay attention to the nature of 'educational practice' and the distinctive language and values through which such a practice can be understood and evaluated. We need to ask what *educational* practice actually means? And that requires, according to Pring (2000), "a little more philosophical homework than is normally given" (p. 497).

Educational research cannot escape philosophical questions about the nature of an 'educational practice' and thus of 'educational inquiry'. The nature of the language used to describe educational practice by researchers needs to be related to the language of the teachers through which they understand and define the reality of school life. The process of 'educational practice' will be different for individual teachers as they approach it from different starting points and different perceptions. The procedure presents many kinds of complexities. As Gauthier (1963) has remarked, "the sphere of the practical is necessarily the sphere of the uncertain" (p. 1).

A practical problem is "a problem about what to do … whose final solution is found only in doing something, in acting" (p. 49).

Young (1999) has argued that because most educational studies take place within a single theoretical framework, the findings of these studies do not provide a comprehensive understanding of the problems being researched (cf. e.g. Ball, 1994; Rist, 1994; Scheurich & Young, 1997). In response to this problem, she argues in favor of using more than one theoretical approach to examine and analyze the same issues. The process of analyzing and interpreting the data through different frames provides a forum for comparing the similarities and differences in the findings that emerge from different perspectives. This multifocal process involves viewing from one lens and subsequently reconsidering the phenomena from another.

In this paper, our frames of reference are three interpretations from the philosophy and ethics. We argue that the use of more than one theoretical approach will expand and complement our traditional approaches in educational studies. The practice may help us better understand the ethical problems we study; the dynamics of educational contexts; and value the impact of different ethical approaches on teachers and students. We also hope that using more than one theoretical approach will increase the trustworthiness of research findings because each approach can serve as a check on the other. Thus, as Young (1999) emphasizes, "inaccurate assumptions and problematic interpretations should be more easily revealed, and tenets formerly accepted as given are more likely to be questioned" (p. 679). As a result, our ability to construct the ethical dilemmas in education should be moved to a level of deeper understanding.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: FRAMES OF MORAL REFERENCE POINTS

The ethic of purpose

The development of an interpretative account on moral issues starts from the ethic of purpose. Without this standpoint, Nash (1996) argues, a coherent moral dialogue between ourselves and the world cannot take place. The perspective is intended to provide a sort of self-understanding that can lead to an adequately informed and defensible ethical action.

Here the ethical dilemmas are understood from the teleological perspective. According to Aristotle, determination of a proper purpose or *telos* (final end) can help people in defining the best interests of their fellow men. As Walker (1998) emphasizes, "[t]he attention of this ethic is on the agent and the act" (p. 297). He

explains that in educational settings a particular decision is justified if it facilitates the development of students' individual potentials as human beings. Educators' self-evaluations as well as the evaluations of people outside the profession are carried out with the ethic of purpose in mind. According to this ethic, the purpose of educational institutions resides in the conscious potential, which in turn directs the organization's resources and its practical actions.

Nash (1996) calls this the "first moral language" or the language of "grounding beliefs." It gives us an opportunity to identify some important systems of morality and their accompanying claims. It also provides a chance to examine the underlying assumptions why something is regarded as right or wrong. Within this realm teachers develop a more or less comprehensive and coherent account of their moral convictions. It is important for them, as professionals (Sockett, 1993), to be both conscious of and able to articulate these fundamental sources of their working ethics.

Taylor (1992) speaks about these realms as a person's "background of intelligibility," those "moral horizons against which things take on significance for us" (p. 37). In many cases it is the world we know only dimly. However, as Nash (1996, p. 40) argues, this perspective is not meant for immediate utility. Its premises are not meant to apply straightforwardly to the analysis and resolution of a particular ethical dilemma. That will come later. Its task is to provide an essential basis for further levels of ethical reasoning. The major purpose of this perspective is an effort to understand the unique and inescapable nature of the "ethical centers of reference" (Nash, 1996, p. 40).

The ethic of rules and principles

Moral dilemmas can also be viewed from a deontological or principle-based perspective. The approach "judges educational decisions according to implicit and explicit rules and duties owed" (Walker, 1998, p. 298). The aim is defined by *a priori* duties, rules, and principles. The focus tends to be, as Walker points out, "on the policy decisions (means) and on the educator's conformity to an ethical principle or a set of rules" (ibid.).

Philosophically the stance can be linked to Kant. Among moral philosophers he is mostly associated with the notion that one should act according to a maxim that would aptly become a universal rule for all. This rule of universality, or the "categorical imperative," was formulated in his doctrine of respect for persons (Kant 1785/1983). Deontological approach appeals to certain rules and principles as being good in themselves. These principles are regarded as valid independently of whether or not they produce benefits or maximize good consequences.

The perspective of principles is, according to Nash (1996, p. 110), "a 'thin' moral language" and it is procedural by its nature (Reid, 1979). It relies not on metaphysical accounts of morality, but on abstract, general and principled accounts of appropriate guidelines of how to act. Thus, the stance requires teachers to agree on ethical courses of action based on a set of general moral rules and principles. They provide a general guide to action, a certain authority in ethical decision-making.

Whenever asked what these moral principles are, teachers tend to speak in simple maxims, which for them can be desirable rules of conduct. Be caring. Be available when your pupils need you. Practice what you preach, and so. These general principles and moral rules can be seen as the underpinnings for such formal principles as thoughtfulness, accessibility, and coherence. As action guides, these principles indicate the moral rights and obligations that are at stake in a dilemma. Nash (1996) argues that they can clarify and justify the solutions to moral problems because they "provide the standards by which ethical actions and decisions are made" (p. 111).

The ethic of probability

Moral dilemmas can also be interpreted through a calculation of the probable positive and negative consequences (short and long term) of a particular educational decision. Once the likely outcomes are predicted, the alternatives that provide the greatest benefit and least harm may be chosen.

Philosophically the stance is backed by utilitarian perspectives. Utilitarians such as Mill (1861/1979) are concerned primarily with the results of an activity. According to simple utilitarianism, one may judge the best way by determining which policy decision is likely to produce the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people. In other words, the best interests of students are served if the negative consequences are minimized and positive benefits are maximized (Walker, 1998, p. 300). The problem of attaining a fair and just resolution that also works usually means the balancing of the pros and cons of the conflict. The problems usually compel us to choose between competing goals and values. We may choose a solution that aims to maximize the desired results across a range of students involved, but some will suffer at the expense of others.

The process through which this is achieved resembles "practical reasoning" (Carlgren & Lindblad, 1991; Pendlebury, 1993) and "deliberation" (Johnston, 1993). It shows that the problems teachers face in their work relate most closely to the class of questions that are referred to as "uncertain practical questions" (Gauthier, 1963). According to Reid (1979, p. 188-9), they are problems that usually have many common features: i) They are problems that have to be answered - even if the answer is to decide to do nothing. ii) The grounds on which decisions should be made are

uncertain. Nothing can tell us infallibly which method should be used, what evidence should be taken into account or rejected, what kinds of arguments should be given precedence. iii) We always have to take the existing state of affairs into account. We are never free from past or present contexts and their arrangements. iv) Each problem is in some ways unique, belonging to a specific time and context, the particulars of which we can never exhaustively describe. v) We can never predict the outcome of the particular solution we choose, still less know what the outcome would have been had we made a different choice.

Lampert (1985) speaks about "dilemma managing" in which teachers cannot choose a solution to a problem without comprising other goals they seek to accomplish. Teachers cannot see their goals as a neat dichotomy between one and the another and their job as making clear choices. In many cases, teachers' aims for any particular student are entangled with teachers' aims for each of the others in the class and in the school's professional community

METHOD AND DATA

The method of our study is a personal interview with 33 Finnish lower secondary (22 females/ 11 males) school teachers. The teachers were given a structured interview in their native language lasting approximately 30 minutes. In the interview, the teachers were asked to describe one particular case of a moral dilemma they had experienced during their teaching career and the principles they used in the solving process. They were encouraged to choose a situation in which they had had difficulty in deciding the right way to act. The teachers were asked to tell about the case in detail, with all of the important context factors. All the interviews were recorded and later transcribed. All the materials were translated from Finnish into English with the help of a native English speaker. The main themes of moral dilemmas were categorized by content analyses. Special attention was given to the solutions to different dilemmas and the principles guiding them. The results of the whole study are reported in various international journals (see Tirri, 1999; Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen 1999).

In this paper, we have chosen one case study of a moral dilemma from the whole data set, a narrative told by one female teacher, which was shown to be very difficult for the teachers to solve. This particular case has been analyzed using a hermeneutical approach (Gadamer, 1976) to better understand the multifocal perspectives in teachers' ethical reflection. According to Bernstein (1992), the goal of the hermeneutical approach to ethics is to determine what moral issues mean to us and to interpret and translate this understanding by analysing the language being used. It

aims to give concrete expressions to these interpretations by our daily ethical actions. Hermeneutics derives from the Greek *hermeneuein*, "to interpret into one's own idiom, to give expression to, to attribute meaning to." We also share Nash's (1996, pp. 56-57) argument that the world of ethics is an endlessly interpretable world, and there is rarely a final or definite response to an ethical dilemma.

Reading guide

In the analysis, we have adopted a qualitative reading guide to examine the ethical frameworks underlying teachers' practical reflection in the case of smoking. The reading guide is based on the evidence that persons simultaneously know (can recognize, speak in, and respond to) various different perspectives in discussing moral issues and may show a preference for one over the other (Brown *et al.*, 1989, 1991; Gilligan *et al.*, 1990; Johnston, 1989). Evidence of the ability of individuals to speak in various perspectives suggests that the narrative self (Bruner, 1995) is multi-voiced and involved in choices about how to speak. In reading texts, we regard persons as moral agents with respect to the concerns about the relationship they present and those they keep silent. The reading guide aims to highlight the various ethical perspectives, as well as the sense of tension people often convey in their case reports of lived moral experiences. Thus, it is a voice-sensitive method that attempts to record the complexity of case reports of moral conflicts and choice, and attempts to capture the personal, relational, and cultural dimensions of lived experiences (Brown *et al.*, 1991, p. 29). The reading guide focuses on interpreting the narrator's way of seeing and speaking about the phenomenon.

The method focuses on the reading process and the creation of an interpretative account of a narrative case report. According to Bahktin (1981), individual words and phrases that are used to describe moral thought, feeling, and action are meaningless in and of themselves to explain the particular meaning (p. 276). Therefore, as Brown *et al.* (1991) interpret, "[t]he living language exists only in a web of interrelationships that allow a narrator's meaning to become clear only if the context, the narrative, is maintained" (p. 27). Thus, it is only by allowing language to exist in narrative relationships that it is possible to interpret and understand another's moral experiences.

Interpretative procedures

The Reading Guide aims to provide an approach to interpreting case reports of conflict and choice. It allows a reader to specify the ways in which a person chooses between or lives with them. Both authors of the paper read the story a total of three consecutive times from three ethical perspectives. The three perspectives and their

multiple readings provided a practical frame of reference for the investigated dilemma by analyzing it from different philosophical and ethical viewpoints. Table I presents the three perspectives together with their consecutive readings.

Table I. The interpretative procedures of the reading guide.

I perspective: The ethic of purpose
This perspective tries to uncover the final ends of the pedagogical practice in question. According to this stance, within the domain of moral judgement, a global assessment comes before the specific practical actions. The perspective focuses on the narrator's expressed concerns about the sources of the problem. It is a question of attitudes and attitudes revealed in actions to work out, or live with, the faced problems. Solutions to them can often be sought by an interactive consideration of means and ends. The first comprehensive reading aims to uncover *what lies behind the moral dilemma?*

II perspective: The ethic of rules and principles
The second perspective aims to reveal the practical action guides teachers rely on. Rules and principles are usually brief statements of what to do or what should be done in a particular situation encountered in practice. The major purpose of the perspective is to justify or defend educational decisions based on certain appropriate rules and principles. The second reading provides the answer to the question *what are the profession's code of ethics regarding the moral dilemma?*

III perspective: The ethic of probability
The third distinction investigates the emergent dilemmas when rules and principles are put into practice. What kind of pedagogical dilemmas arise, and how do teachers try to cope with these situations? The stance focuses on the evaluation of the taken or intended actions and their possible results. Solutions to moral conflicts are often found only by doing something, by acting. The third comprehensive reading concentrates on the issue *what are the practical choices in a moral dilemma?*

After each reading, the authors filled in a summary worksheet. For the readers, the worksheets provided a place to document relevant pieces of the text and to make interpretative remarks. The worksheets were intended to emphasize the move from the narrator's written words to a reader's interpretation or summary of them. They require the reader to substantiate her/his interpretation with quotes from the written story itself. As such, the worksheets stand between the written story and the main generalized philosophical and ethical perspectives drawn from the particular cases. According to Brown *et al.* (1991), "they provide a trail of evidence from the reader's interpretations of the narrative" (p. 33).

In the final step of the reading process, the authors used the summary worksheets that aim to capture the details of three philosophical and ethical perspectives in order to summarize the chosen viewpoints. Summary worksheets provide a brief interpretation of the writers' representation of their lived moral experience.

Here the point is that it takes time and effort to perceive moral qualities in dilemmas. They do not become visible at a glance. As Jackson (1992) has emphasized, it is a matter of becoming sensitive to how those qualities are

characteristically expressed in the case report of this particular person (p. 404). The process of getting to know requires various phases of reflection. We learn moral qualities "by thinking about them, by reflecting what our observations mean" (Jackson, 1992, p. 406). This notion is not unique, but the fact that the importance of that reflection is brought to the fore is worth noting. Jackson speaks about "prolonged reflection" which is as essential as the time spent gathering, transcribing, and labeling the data.

A case

Smoking has been identified as a typical moral dilemma in a secondary school community that lacks common ethical standards and rules (Tirri 1999). Smoking is one of the things that are forbidden by law in Finnish schools. Nobody should practice smoking during the active school hours. However, both teachers and students break this rule in several ways. Schools have different practices and teachers often disagree with each other and with their students about the best practices. The following quote in Table II from a teacher's interview reflects many problems associated with smoking in Finnish secondary schools:

Table II. The analyzed narrative

"I have been very concerned about the smoking policy in our school. I think a great number of our students smoke and many of the teachers smoke as well. This is an acute and frequent problem that I have to consider every single day in my work. Everybody knows that students smoke under the bridge that is located next to our school. However, the law forbids smoking during school hours. We have this law but hardly anybody observes it. Some teachers smoke, too, and other teachers and students know it. And the law also forbids teachers to smoke during school hours. Nobody really knows what to do about smoking. I know myself that smoking is bad for your health and students know it too. It is not a question of not being informed about the negative consequences of smoking. What can I do as a single teacher to change the situation? It doesn't help to send notes home if I am the only teacher doing it. I think homes and elementary schools play a keyrole in finding solutions to this problem. The complicated thing is that some teachers smoke with their students. They might even suggest a break to have a cigarette. I know that notes home and forcing the students to stay in school after hours don't help the situation. I smoked myself for fifteen years, I know what I am dealing with. I have tried to be a role model for my students and I have told them about my former smoking habit. I have assured them that it is possible to quit smoking. Every single morning I walk by the bridge and tell the students to put their cigarettes away. Some of the students obey me and some don't. I have also tried to talk with my colleagues. I talked with the music teacher about a girl who has a beautiful voice. I think she could be a professional singer some day and smoking might seriously damage her voice. I asked the music teacher to talk with this girl about protecting her voice.

I don't see any concrete way to influence our school community. I should build a fence to stop the students from going to the bridge. However, then they might start to smoke in the toilets and that would be even worse for those who don't smoke. The principal should do something. We used to have a smoking room for teachers but it was shut down. Now the teachers smoke outside as well. The principal should take steps to prevent teachers from smoking during their working hours. I don't think we can solve the problem with students before we can influence the teachers."

RESULTS: FRAMES OF PRACTICAL REFERENCE

Background beliefs

When the teacher was talking about responsibility, the law, rights, ideals, and professional obligations, she was actually describing her most fundamental assumptions. They guided her perception of educational practice and what she experienced as good or bad, right or wrong, important or unimportant. These assumptions seemed to be the ultimate bases by which the teacher made her decisions. From this personally held life-space the teacher experienced educational dilemmas from the vantage point of her own unique "horizon of meanings" (Barnes, 1971, p. 65). This life-space was her vantage point, her ethical center of reference. The stance led her to question several of the purposes of her actions within the school context she worked: What was this educational organization trying to achieve? What was the right way to go about this task? Did all teachers and students see the purpose in the same way? Table III provides examples of text excerpts and readers' interpretative comments using the ethic of purpose as the reading perspective.

Table III: Reading perspective: the ethic of purpose

Text excerpts	**Interpretative comments**
The law forbids teachers as well as students to smoke during school hours.	Behind this perspective lies the fact that smoking is prohibited by the law.
We have this law but hardly anybody observes it. The complicated thing is that some teachers smoke with their students. Some teachers might even suggest a break to have a cigarette.	From the professional perspective the prevailing situation is unbearable because both teachers and students consciously break the law
Nobody really knows what to do about smoking ... I don't see any concrete way to influence our school community.	The teacher's immediate moral intuitions and stirrings about the situation seem helpless.
Students' homes and previous school levels play a keyrole in finding solutions to this problem.	Due to the nature of the dilemma she argues that the responsibility lies with students' parents. This belief is reflected in the teacher's scheme of justification: Someone else has to do the job.
I don't think we can solve the problem with students before we can influence the teachers.	Here, professional ideals collide with organizational realities.
I don't see any concrete way to influence our school community. ... The principal should take steps to prevent teachers from smoking.	Collegially teachers are not capable to co-operate with each other. Therefore, primary argumentation is directed towards the principal.

McCadden (1998) calls organizational morality the moral basis of teachers' practical actions in school settings. He defines organizational morality as the teacher's belief that her/his role as a teacher demands that s/he instills in her/his students an adherence to public school life (p. 35). It concerns ideas about what students need to learn socially about school life. They are things that students need in their life: For example, what does it mean to act legally, what are the consequences of breaking the norm? According to Finnish curricular guidelines, the social preparation of students comes prior to a concentration on academic work in the progression of school. The aim is not to educate children to become 'good students' but active and decent future citizens. From this perspective, organizational morality can be seen as a socially constructed morality among members of the teaching profession.

As the excerpts and their interpretative comments in Table I indicated, moral dilemmas were presented to the teacher - beyond her personal self- in the sense that they involved others. But moral conflicts were also subjective - inside the teacher - in that they each brought a unique center of reference to these issues. The teacher reported that she had smoked for fifteen years and she was very concerned about the smoking policy in her school. Despite the lack of collegial support at the organizational level she was confident that students could quit their smoking habit.

Standards of action guides

In looking for evidence of rules and principles, we were not interested primarily in statements having an outward form of a rule or a principle, but rather in the way such statements operate in structuring the teacher's knowledge (cf. Elbaz, 1983; Tirri, Husu & Kansanen, 1999). At first sight, the teacher's statements might look like mere description, yet they functioned as a rule or principle, or sometimes in both ways simultaneously. Rules and principles told the teacher what to do and/or how to act and react in certain specific situations.

The stance functioned as a guide to action and presented an authority in the teacher's decision-making. The perspective was basically procedural. It led the teacher to identify the relevant, yet often implicit principle, apply it to the case, and act accordingly. On this level the teacher relied on implications which guided her when making educational decisions. She identified herself as a principled professional that had a set of norms by which she lived and which she was willing to stand by and defend. Table IV provides examples of text excerpts used and interpretative comments made by authors using the ethics of rules and principles as a reading perspective.

Rules and principles could be highly specific and/or they could be applied to broader situations. In both cases rules and principles made reference to the details of

the situations to which they related. They could be derived from a wide variety of sources. The basic starting point was naturally the legal directive which prohibited both teachers and students from smoking during school hours. Despite its normative force the law was unable to govern their action.

Table IV: Reading perspective: the ethic of rules and principles

Text excerpts	Interpretative comments
We have this law but hardly anybody observes it ... The complicated thing is that some teachers smoke with their students. ... The teachers might even suggest a break to have a cigarette	The prevailing situation clearly breaks both professional norms and their organizational applications. Legal principles tended to reduce problem-solving to a series of laissez-faire exercises. This was apparent on the professional level where teachers consciously broke the rule.
What can I do as a single teacher to change the situation? It doesn't help to send notes home if I am the only teacher doing it.	Here, on the individual level, the teacher summarized the dilemma of rules and principles.
I have been very concerned about the smoking policy in our school ... This is an acute and frequent problem that I have to consider every single day in my work. ... Nobody really knows what to do about smoking. I know myself that smoking is bad for your health and the students know it, too. It is not a question of not being informed about the negative consequences of smoking. ... I myself smoked for fifteen years, I know what I am dealing with. ... I have tried to be a role model for my students and I have told them about my former smoking habit. I have assured them that it is possible to quit smoking. Every single morning I walk close by bridge and tell the students to put their cigarettes away.	The code of practical guidance also grew intuitively out of the teacher's personal experiences. However, it was often difficult to separate the general aspects from the individual ones as the rules and principles seemed to develop from some conjunction of the two. The excerpt reflects mediation between thought and action. Rules and principles functioned as a guideline on or from which the teacher acted; she followed their often implicit and personal dictates.

As a result, what happened within this particular dilemma was that most teachers were unable to satisfy either the legal or the practical requirements of the situation. More importantly, they fell short of examining the moral implications of the dilemma in question. Therefore, they neglected their moral responsibility to perceive the issue beyond its short-term effects.

The perspective was largely a realm of reflective activity and interpretation was needed. Rules and principles are often "open-textured" by their nature (Brennan, 1977). That is, they were difficult to interpret in such an explicit manner that they could encompass the varied kinds of actions that could be counted as instances of

acting on that rule and principle. Simply getting to know the principle did not tell the readers whether their interpretation of a problem was desirable or justifiable.

Skills of dilemma managing

As presented above, the teacher's work was embedded in practical actions and it was situated mainly in and between students and colleagues. The teacher had to stand in a constant relation to both these parties and her emphasis was on concrete particulars. They were interpreted through the eyes of the practitioner. Therefore, the starting point could be formulated as "what was perceived?" To be able to consider and choose appropriate actions, the teacher had to be able to perceive her relevant features of the dilemma. As presented, these could not be transmitted in some general and abstract form because it was a matter of fitting her choices to the "complex requirements of a concrete situation" (Nussbaum, 1986, p. 303), taking all its contextual features into account.

The ethic of the teacher had a great deal to do with both the way she defined the dilemma and what could be done about it. The dilemma arose because the state of affairs in the school community was not what she would have liked it to be. Thus, the practical nature of the dilemma involved the teacher's wish for a change, and simultaneously, her powerless reaction to the prevailing situation. Even though the teacher was influenced by many strong forces in her school community, the responsibility to act still remained.

From the teacher's point of view, the intention to act in a professionally coherent manner led to even more problems. She could not hope to arrive at the "right" solution or action in a sense that the two preceding perspectives, background beliefs and the standards of action guides, can be said to be "right." This is because each member of the community brought her/his own, often contradictory aims to the situation, and the resolution of their dissonance could not be neat or simple. The juxtaposition of varied views and responsibilities could easily lead to even further paradoxes. Table V provides examples of text excerpts used and interpretative comments made by authors using the ethic of probability as a reading perspective.

Table V: Reading perspective: the ethic of probability

Text excerpts	Interpretative comments
What can I do as a single teacher to change the situation? It doesn't help to send notes home if I am the only teacher doing it. ... I know that notes home and forcing the students to stay in school after the hours don't help the situation ... I don't see any concrete way to influence our school community. I should build a fence to stop the students from going to the bridge. However, then they might start to smoke in the toilets and that would make the situation even worse for those who don't smoke.	Here, even if the teacher could not find the "right" solution, the problem had to be answered in some way or another - even if the answer was to decide to do nothing in order to avoid causing any further problems.

In practice, all the possible "solutions" seemed to lead to further problems. The teacher felt that she could not choose a solution without comprising other goals she wished to achieve. Nevertheless, she was convinced that some action had to be taken. As shown above, the teacher did not consider the conflicts as a choice between abstract beliefs or between competing rules and principles. What she perceived were tensions between individual colleagues, and personal confrontations between herself and a particular group of students. She could not see her basic beliefs and rules and principles as a neat and workable scheme to guide her job as making clear choices. Instead of engaging in a decision-making process that would eliminate various alternatives, she pursued a series of loose arguments with herself as she considered the consequences of the practices. Her aims for any particular colleague or student were tangled up with her aims for each of the others in the school context. The working perspectives were formed in a community which provided both the professional and personal settings and structures, as well as the guiding exemplars necessary for her practical action.

DISCUSSION: MORAL REFLECTION AS INTERPLAY BETWEEN THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL REFLECTION

In this paper, we have presented a case study of a practical dilemma that teachers have found difficult to deal with in their professional practice. The case of smoking has been presented through a teacher's narrative. Our aim has been to approach one case from multiple theoretical perspectives. We have adopted three interpretative viewpoints from the field of philosophy and ethics. These viewpoints have guided our

analysis to focus on the ethic of purpose, the ethic of rules and principles, and the ethic of probability, together with their philosophical perspectives and practical interpretations. Our analysis uncovered the background beliefs of a teacher that guided her ethical reflection in the smoking case. These background beliefs included the teacher's own values that guided her educational practice. Furthermore, the teacher's own attitudes and concerns were identified as influential factors affecting her practical reflection.

The teacher's perceptions of the professional code of ethics were revealed in her reflection on the rules and principles guiding her educational practice in the case of smoking. The legal norms and organizational morality guided teachers' standards that they applied to the smoking case. However, teacher's own interpretations of rules and principles were identified as the most important sources of the standards guiding their professional practice.

In a practical dilemma, the teacher's skills of dilemma managing revealed her interpretation and identification of the most relevant issues concerning the case. In our case study, the teacher could not find the "right" solution, though she had to find some practical ways to deal with the dilemma. The teacher's justification for doing nothing in order to avoid further harm revealed the ethic of probability in her practical reflection.

We can conclude that teachers use different ethical perspectives in their practical reflection. Our case of smoking provides an example of a real-life dilemma that is not possible to understand using only one interpretative perspective. In real-life pedagogical dilemmas, teachers need the capability to hold together several perspectives simultaneously. They need the capacity to synthesize and analyze, to hold together under a general idea and to break things down into their separate particulars (Whitehead, 1999).

Nash (1996, p. 148) has pointed out that there is a lack of integrative models in the professional literature today. According to him, teachers need some kind of justification schema with both theoretical and practical viewpoints. We have sketched these kinds of a schema for teachers' practical reflection in Figure 1. In this schema, real -life dilemmas are approached using both theoretical and practical reflection. The final action a teacher takes in order to solve or live with the dilemma is produced in the interplay between the theoretical and practical viewpoints.

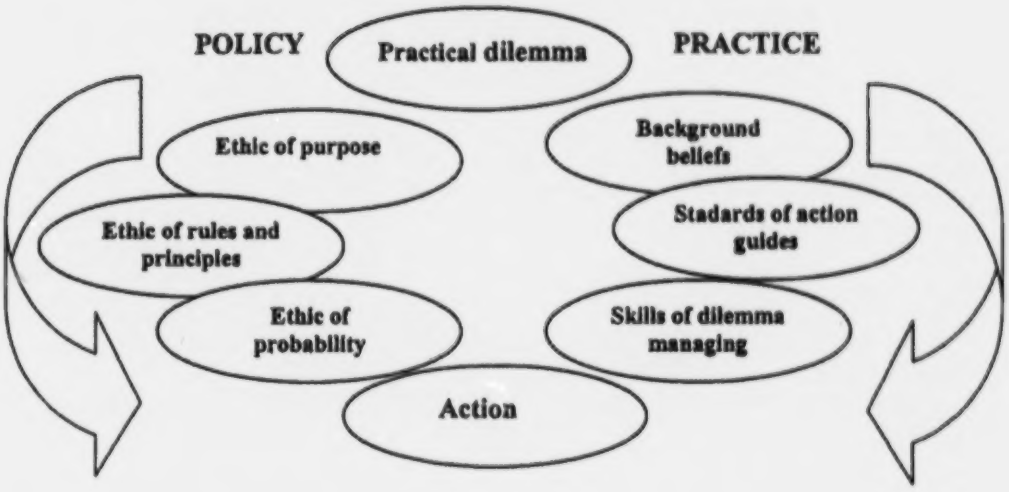

Figure 1. A justification schema for teachers' practical reflection

Our schema for teachers' practical reflection integrates the three ethical perspectives presented in the theoretical framework of this paper. The ethic of purpose reveals the background beliefs of a teacher concerning the nature of the healthy life. The ethic of rules and principles provides the standards of action guides for teachers to defend the healthy life. The ethic of probability helps the teachers to act or not to act in order to defend the healthy lives of their students. Teachers should be guided to reflect on all these ethical perspectives and their implications in practice.

We argue, in accordance with Nash (1996), that educational decisions are shaped by the interrelationship of several elements: metaphysical beliefs, virtues, personal philosophies, communities, workplace norms, circumstances, consequences, feelings, and intuitions. Our schema has integrated these elements into three practical reflection sources: background beliefs, standards of action guides, and skills of dilemma managing (see Figure 1). In pursuit of action teachers blend the bits and pieces of the different frameworks into a situationally functioning whole.

In our case study, we have tried to explore the interrelationships of different elements in teachers' practical reflection. We have used both theoretical and empirical frameworks in order to create an integrative model of applied ethics for teachers. As our analysis revealed, smoking is a case that required different ethical perspectives to inform teachers in their decision-making. In addition, the case can be used as a learning case in the sense that there are no absolutely indisputable decisions. Pedagogical actions can't be 'proved', they can only be defended.

No ethical framework, even in combinations with other frameworks, will ever be totally satisfying. In the final decision each teacher must find a way through difficult ethical cases with thoughtful deliberation. We agree with Nash that in a good ethical decision "the final discernment is an informed intuition" that always involves a risk. This risk is what teachers need to take in order to make educational decisions in the best interests of their students.

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